United Nations S/2018/463

Security Council

Distr.: General
16 May 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 15 May 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

1. In paragraph 43 (a) (iv) of its resolution 2387 (2017), the Security Council requested me to present recommendations, with detailed benchmarks and timelines, to the Council for its consideration and possible approval on support for the progressive and coordinated redeployment of the Central African armed forces units trained by the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic. The provision of such support is intended to be an element of the strategy for the extension of State authority, in accordance with the United Nations human rights due diligence policy and with the guarantee that it does not constitute a risk to the stabilization of the country, civilians or the political process. I recall that during my visit to the Central African Republic in October 2017, I stated that support for the reoperationalization of the Central African armed forces was among the main priorities of the United Nations.

2. Pursuant to the above-mentioned request, the Secretariat undertook extensive consultations with the Central African authorities, the European Union, Security Council members, bilateral and multilateral partners and United Nations stakeholders to develop recommendations that would be in line with the vision of Central Africans for their defence and internal security forces, would complement the support provided by other partners and would reinforce the core peacekeeping priorities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) pursuant to resolution 2387 (2017). In Bangui, MINUSCA consulted closely with the Central African authorities, including the President, Faustin Archange Touadéra, the Ministers of Defence and the Interior, the European Union Military Training Mission and bilateral partners. On 12 April 2018, on the margins of the first meeting of the International Support Group on the Central African Republic, held in Bangui, the Government presented its plans for the immediate and long-term deployment of its defence and internal security forces and requested funding from the international community for them, in the presence of the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union.

3. The recommendations contained in the present letter further draw upon lessons learned from support provided by other United Nations peacekeeping operations to national security forces. They are informed by the experience of MINUSCA with its initial operational cooperation with and support for the Central African defence and internal security forces together with other partners, as outlined in my recent reports to the Security Council in October 2017 (S/2017/865) and February 2018 (S/2018/125). The recommendations are also aimed at paving the way for the Central

Please recycle

African authorities to gradually assume their full security responsibilities and thus facilitate the eventual drawdown and future withdrawal of MINUSCA.

Context

4. The redeployment of the defence and internal security forces of the Central African Republic is taking place in the context of the continued presence and activity of armed groups, criminals and other armed spoilers, as well as intercommunal violence, compounded by a lack of capacity in the national defence and internal security forces and the absence of State authority in most parts of the country. These forces largely collapsed owing to successive conflicts, while some elements of the Central African armed forces collaborated with armed groups and committed violations of international human rights and humanitarian law during the recent conflict. This context, as well as the history and root causes of the country's cyclical crises, and the impact that these conflicts have had on its social fabric, are critical factors in determining how such a redeployment can be undertaken successfully.

5. As part of its mandate to support the reform of the defence sector, the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic has already trained two of the six envisaged battalions and will soon finalize the training of a third. Since January 2018, MINUSCA has temporarily, and on an ad hoc basis, supported the redeployment to Obo and Paoua, and will soon support the redeployment to Bangassou, of small military units trained by the European Union Mission and internal security forces (the police and gendarmerie) to Bambari. The Government has ensured the payment of the forces' salaries and living stipends. Their presence has been appreciated by the local population, with the forces demonstrating good conduct, respect for human rights and adequate command and control.

6. Lessons can be drawn from these experiences. First, the police and gendarmerie must deploy jointly or in a phased manner with the armed forces to ensure that core law enforcement tasks, such as the investigation, arrest and detention of alleged criminals, are not left to the military and to help enable adherence to good standards of conduct through the provision of military provosts. Second, these defence and internal security forces do not currently have sufficient capacity to provide security and maintain law and order without the continued support of MINUSCA and the international community. They have faced a wide range of logistical constraints, including the absence of the means to establish temporary camps as well as to provide petrol and lubricants, rations and potable water, emergency care for the wounded and casualty evacuation, vehicle maintenance and repair, and electricity in the absence of an adequate national logistical chain.

7. This situation is clearly not sustainable, bearing in mind the security situation, stabilization objectives and law and order requirements. While the 2018 national budget dedicated significant resources to the defence and internal security sectors, there is insufficient allocation of funding for operational and capital costs. Of the 2018 defence budget of 17 billion CFA francs (approximately $32 million), 81 per cent covers personnel expenses, while only 7 per cent is available for capital investments and 1 per cent for field operational costs.

8. The draft military programming law and the forthcoming revision of the national budget propose increases in field operational costs on the basis of the Government's proposed deployment plans. Should the law be adopted by the National Assembly, it would be a concrete demonstration of the commitment of Central Africans to assume their responsibilities for ensuring the sustainability of their own security operations. Allocations for the police and gendarmerie in the 2018 budget are similarly insufficient to cover their costs, standing at 0.64 per cent and 0.85 per cent,

respectively, of the overall budget. The Government, however, has pledged to increase allocations for internal security forces.

Concept for the deployment of the Central African defence and internal security forces

9. The concept for the deployment of the Central African defence and internal security forces stems from the broader political commitment of the Central African authorities to reform their security sector. This political commitment is enshrined, in particular, in the conclusions of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation of 2015, the Framework of Mutual Accountability (2016), the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan (2016), the National Strategy for the Restoration of State Authority (2017) and the security sector reform framework, which includes the national security policy (2016), the five-year capacity-building and development plan for the internal security forces (2016), the national security sector reform strategy (2017) and the national defence plan (2017).

10. The national defence plan proposes the transformation of the Central African armed forces into a "garrison army", in which military units would be permanently based in defined locations outside the capital in four defence zones; this represents a change in practice from projecting military force from the capital. The plan foresees a 9,800-strong defence force by 2021. The total number would be drawn from the existing workforce of 7,737, subject to reductions from vetting and retirement. The defence plan also lays out objectives of improving capacity and accountability, command and control and civilian oversight and achieving a more balanced representation of the population. On the basis of the plan, the Government adopted the guidance document for the Central African armed forces for the period 2017–2019 (referred to in resolution 2387 (2017)), outlining the principles and sequence for their deployment.

11. In February 2018, the Ministers of Defence and the Interior validated a joint five-year concept for the deployment of both the defence and internal security forces, which seeks to ensure complementarity between their deployments. The joint concept recommends mechanisms for coordination, joint use of resources and strong measures to ensure respect for the rule of law and accountability. It serves as the basis for specific deployment plans, including logistical, equipment and financial requirements. The joint concept calls for increasing police and gendarmerie strength in areas where it is planned to immediately deploy the Central African armed forces, as well as in other areas facing threats to stability and law and order, and to backfill once military forces have been withdrawn.

12. The joint concept also describes objectives, strategies and priority areas, as well as planning and coordination mechanisms, for immediate operational deployments over the coming 18 months, with the aim of commencing on 1 July 2018. These immediate deployments aim to address urgent security challenges and current threats to civilians, as well as to support the extension of State authority in targeted priority areas. The deployments will also enable the acceleration of disarmament efforts, as well as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and community violence reduction programmes. The joint concept formed the basis for the development of the overall requirements for such immediate deployments, as well as for the generation of national and international efforts to cover remaining gaps.

Current multilateral and bilateral support

13. Further to its establishment by the European Union in 2016, the Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic has taken the lead on behalf of the international community in supporting the Central African Republic in the reform of

its defence sector. In accordance with its mandate, MINUSCA has complemented these efforts to support defence sector reform efforts, including by contributing to enhance the readiness of the a. ned forces for their redeployment while ensuring coherence of these efforts with the broader security sector reform. Pursuant to Security Council resolutions 2301 (2016) and 2387 (2017), MINUSCA has taken the lead on the reform of the police and gendarmerie, to which bilateral partners and the European Union have contributed, including through the refurbishment of police and gendarmerie stations and the provision of training and equipment. The European Union is considering broadening its current area of responsibility to Bouar to support the Central African armed forces presence there when its mandate is next renewed in July 2018, as well as providing greater capacity support to internal security forces.

14. The support currently provided by MINUSCA and the European Union Military Training Mission to reoperationalize the armed forces has been complemented by bilateral partners, which have sought to fill critical gaps not covered by the respective mandates of MINUSCA and the European Union Mission, including by providing lethal and non-lethal military assistance. France has donated non-lethal equipment, including vehicles, and logistical and medical equipment for the first European Union Mission-trained infantry battalion, as well as for the amphibious battalion. China has donated various non-lethal military assets, including material for temporary infrastructure and signals equipment. The United States of America has contributed vehicles and transmission equipment, while Spain has donated uniforms and individual protection gear for two battalions. The Russian Federation has donated weapons and ammunition, as well as training, for European Union Mission-trained or certified Central African armed forces battalions, as well as for the police and gendarmerie, which should be sufficient to cover the planned redeployments of both for 18 months. As has been the case to date, all lethal equipment will continue to be provided on the basis of bilateral arrangements between the Government and international partners in compliance with the Security Council sanctions regime, as outlined in Council resolution 2399 (2018).

15. Regional countries have contributed to strengthening the Central African security sector. At the forty-fifth meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held in Rwanda in December 2017, member States adopted the Kigali Declaration, which encouraged regional countries to train Central African military instructors and units and called for the establishment of a training centre in Bangui under the aegis of regional trainers. The Government has requested that training provided by partners, whether inside the country or abroad, be certified by the European Union Military Training Mission to ensure a common standard. Therefore, my recommendations regarding support to the Central African armed forces will cover both categories, that is, those trained by the European Union Mission and those trained by other partners and certified by the European Union Mission.

16. These important contributions notwithstanding, significant gaps remain, which preclude a more sustained redeployment of the Central African armed forces and internal security forces. These gaps need to be addressed by all of the country's partners on the basis of comparative advantages and complementarity in order to enable Central Africans to play a greater role in improving security, protecting civilians and restoring State authority in priority geographical areas.

Parameters conditioning further support for the gradual and progressive redeployment

17. As I outlined in my report of October 2017 (S/2017/865), MINUSCA cannot replace the State or stabilize the entire country alone. That must be a shared undertaking between all national actors and international partners.

18. Continued international support must be accompanied by concrete commitments on the part of national civilian and security authorities that they will ensure that redeployments of defence and internal security forces are sustainable, do not pose a risk to the stabilization of the country, to civilians or to the political process and will strengthen government oversight, command and control and financial allocations. It will also require greater commitment on the part of the national authorities to transform the armed forces into an ethnically representative and geographically balanced army. International support for the redeployment of the European Union Mission-trained or certified Central African armed forces and relevant internal security forces should therefore be subject to the timely implementation of national commitments and in accordance with the agreed objectives, as well as the fulfilment of certain conditions, described hereunder.

19. Multilateral and bilateral support for the redeployment of the defence and internal security forces should aim to: (a) better enable the Government to fulfil its responsibilities to protect civilians in targeted geographical areas while progressively assuming responsibility to provide security in those areas from MINUSCA in a sustainable manner and in line with the National Strategy for the Restoration of State Authority and the security sector reform framework; (b) support the gradual extension of State authority and the return of basic State services in line with the National Strategy for the Restoration of State Authority; (c) create the security conditions conducive to the advancement of a Government-led political process within the framework of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic; and (d) create the conditions for the peace process to unfold at the local level. Achieving these objectives should also progressively reduce the country's dependence on the security role of MINUSCA and facilitate the withdrawal of the Mission.

20. In order that the foregoing international support continue to be provided by its partners, the Central African authorities must make steady and deliberate progress in implementing their commitments detailed in the strategic documents referred to in paragraph 9 above and in accordance with the timelines set out in those documents and the provisions of resolutions 2301 (2016) and 2387 (2017), particularly given the history of the armed forces in the Central African Republic.

21. First and foremost, as noted by the Security Council in its resolutions 2301 (2016) and 2387 (2017), the new and reformed Central African defence and internal security forces must be inclusive, professional, ethnically representative and regionally balanced. Within the framework of the reform of the defence and security sectors, the national authorities would need to rapidly launch a recruitment process for the defence forces, as well as continuing the recruitment and training of the internal security forces, to realize this objective. They should also build upon the lessons learned from the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration pilot project to design a plan for the integration of elements of armed groups meeting rigorous eligibility and vetting criteria, taking into consideration the ongoing political process.

22. Second, the defence and internal security forces must uphold the principles of accountability and the rule of law. The forces would need to comprise individuals who have clean criminal and human rights records. Since June 2017, the Government and MINUSCA have agreed on a credible mechanism for the verification of the criminal and human rights backgrounds of uniformed personnel using information available to MINUSCA in support of the vetting conducted by the Central African authorities. Any units supported by the United Nations will be required to undergo this screening, including units of the armed forces trained by bilateral partners and certified by the European Union Military Training Mission.

23. The United Nations will fully apply its human rights due diligence policy, including through continued training, strong monitoring of performance and conduct, and implementation of risk mitigation measures. Arrangements should be put in place to enable an ongoing constructive dialogue between MINUSCA and the Government to mitigate and address any human rights violations or major misconduct during redeployments supported by MINUSCA, and to help the Government to better enforce accountability when required, including by adopting a code of conduct, reinforcing internal and external oversight mechanisms and strengthening the military justice system. I recall that under the policy, any United Nations support may be suspended or terminated in case of failure to abide by international human rights and humanitarian law.

24. Third, the defence and internal security forces must be supported in a regular and reliable manner. The Central African authorities will need to ensure appropriate budget allocations to pay the salaries and daily subsistence allowance of the deployed units and over time expand funding for operational costs. The upcoming adoption by the Central African authorities of the draft military programming law is expected to set the ground to gradually increase and sustain the national defence budget. Any United Nations support would require clear agreement with the Central African authorities and other key partners on how critical capacity and financial gaps will be filled and sustained.

25. Fourth, local authorities and the population must have trust and confidence in the national defence and internal security forces deployed in their communities. The Government will need to ensure that these redeployments foster stability and peace and do not themselves compromise the peace process or inflame tensions. It will also be important to manage the expectations of the population and to foster confidence by ensuring the adherence of these redeployments to the rule of law and human rights standards. Therefore, a strong strategic communications strategy will be essential, including measures to foster such trust and confidence.

26. Finally, for its part, MINUSCA support cannot be open-ended. To avoid a possible extended dependence of the defence and internal security forces on MINUSCA, any support provided by MINUSCA would have to be subject to clear timelines towards the assumption by the Government of its responsibilities for the operational, financial and logistical burden associated with the redeployments of the defence and internal security forces. While recognizing the substantial limitations of the national budget and resources as well as the many competing priorities facing the Government, the United Nations, together with its partners, needs to ensure that any support also helps the Mission to progress towards its exit.

27. In this context, my recommendations are intended to specify the scope of the support provided by the United Nations to the progressive immediate redeployment of a limited number of Central African armed forces. Such support would be limited in time and subject to regular review, while the Government will continue to deploy the Central African armed forces in garrisons as part of its long-term plan, which will be supported by other multilateral and bilateral partners.

Recommendations for United Nations support for immediate redeployments

28. In the light of the above, and taking into account the current mandate and capacities of MINUSCA, I recommend that MINUSCA provide enhanced planning and technical assistance to the Central African armed forces. This would involve: (a) coordinated planning and conduct of operations, as required; (b) strengthened sharing of field-level information in accordance with United Nations policy; (c) technical guidance in operationalizing the protection of civilians; and (d) field-based training on gender, sexual exploitation and abuse, protection of civilians and

weapons and ammunition storage and management. These tasks would not require any additional capacities or resources and would be complemented by any operational and logistical support detailed below, subject to authorization by the Security Council.

29. I also recommend that the Security Council authorize MINUSCA to provide specified and limited operational and logistical support for the progressive and immediate redeployment of a limited number of European Union Mission-trained or certified Central African armed forces in priority areas to serve alongside MINUSCA units, as well as for accompanying internal security forces, as described below. This mandated task would supplement the current mandated tasks of MINUSCA, including to protect civilians, use "urgent temporary measures" at the request of the Government and support the national authorities in the restoration and maintenance of public safety and the rule of law.

30. There are a number of serious considerations for MINUSCA to provide operational and logistical support. It will be important that MINUSCA support to United Nations personnel and the implementation of its priority mandated tasks, including facilitating humanitarian access, are not compromised in the light of the Mission's limited capacity to take on additional tasks; the availability of resources, subject to procurement lead times; and constraints inherent to the supply chain within the Central African Republic. MINUSCA shall also ensure that the provision of such support will not expose any United Nations personnel to increased security risk or threats.

31. The armed forces would be deployed gradually and would be comprised as follows: one company, with support elements, of up to 203 military personnel from no more than three European Union Mission-trained or certified Central African armed forces battalions. They would be deployed in field operations and rotate every four months with the battalion's other companies, and would be deployed in no more than three locations at any one time. For planning purposes, I consider that there will be up to 650 Central African armed forces elements deployed per cycle, for a maximum of 2,000 elements per year. The redeployment of the armed forces would be accompanied by the redeployment of 70 police officers and 115 gendarme officers to the same three locations, on a permanent basis, to provide basic law and order and provost marshal functions.

32. To contribute to enabling these immediate short-term operational redeployments, I recommend that the Security Council consider the following operational and logistical support services that the United Nations could provide on a yearly basis for an initial period of 12 months, aimed at starting on 1 July 2018:

(a) Casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) and medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) within the country;

(b) Limited air transport for units serving in remote locations;

(c) Fuel and lubricants;

(d) Individual first aid kits;

(e) Supply of combat rations for coordinated operations up to a maximum of 15 days per month, as necessary;

(f) Three hundred two-person tents for use in remote locations or during long-range patrols and 15 prefabricated soft-skin tents;

(g) Potable water for up to 90 days, as required, by which time the national forces should establish their own water supply lines;

(h) Three temporary weapons and ammunition storage facilities for the armed forces and additional training in weapons and ammunition management.

33. Such support would be limited to locations where MINUSCA has sufficient human capacity and capability, physical infrastructure and a reliable logistics supply chain, and would not exceed three locations at any one time. Such support may also be extended to locations where the MINUSCA footprint is limited to the presence of the force.

34. Support would be strictly limited to locations where: (a) MINUSCA troops are deployed; (b) security conditions are favourable; and (c) MINUSCA concludes, following a threat assessment, that the military threats, including the risk of direct confrontation with certain armed groups, do not exceed the operational capacity of the Central African armed forces. These forces would be stationed close to MINUSCA operational sites to facilitate more effective monitoring, support and guidance.

35. MINUSCA operational and logistical support to these forces would be subject to constant monitoring and adjusted as necessary. This would involve regular assessments of the progress made by the national authorities towards fulfilling the conditions for support for the gradual and progressive redeployment, as outlined in paragraphs 17–27 above, as well as of the conduct of the armed forces on the ground, further to close monitoring by MINUSCA in the field. MINUSCA would also draw upon human rights monitoring and strictly adhere to the United Nations human rights due diligence policy. Should progress towards the fulfilment of the conditions be blocked or lapse, MINUSCA operational and logistical support would be stopped immediately.

36. I will consider, in consultation with the Government of the Central African Republic, the signing of a memorandum of understanding or similar arrangement outlining the conditions for and the modalities of such support.

37. There are other critical support services that these forces currently lack and that are not covered in paragraph 32 above, including vehicle recovery and maintenance and the provision of basic health care. MINUSCA troops could extend such support to these forces, where possible, to ensure the effectiveness of their coordinated operations. However, as these services are provided by troop-contributing countries, should the Security Council authorize such support, the Secretariat would then need to seek the agreement of those contributing countries to extend them.

38. It is important to note that should the operational and logistical support outlined above not be provided by MINUSCA or through bilateral agreements, the ability of these Central African armed forces and accompanying police and gendarmerie to perform critical security tasks entrusted to them, and progress in the political process and stabilization of the country, may be significantly undermined.

39. MINUSCA would require additional financial, human and logistical resources to provide such operational and logistical support to the redeployment of European Union Mission-trained or certified Central African armed forces units and internal security forces. These services could be provided directly by multilateral and bilateral partners. However, MINUSCA has a comparative advantage in providing the operational and logistical support described above owing to its extensive field presence and investments already made in its supply chain infrastructure.

40. Support related to the establishment and maintenance of operating bases for European Union Mission-trained or certified Central African armed forces companies, which comprises camps, accommodation, catering, equipment, facilities, camp management, including night-time illumination, and communication and medical services are beyond the scope of MINUSCA and therefore do not form part of my proposals. These requirements, as well as the ones related to the immediate operationalization of the police and gendarmerie, need to be addressed to ensure the sustainability of these redeployments. To this end, MINUSCA could support the

Government by establishing turnkey contracts funded through voluntary contributions. The contributions that partners would provide to the already-established United Nations trust fund would be managed in accordance with United Nations legislative and regulatory frameworks. I wish to underline, however, the fact that voluntary funding mechanisms are unpredictable and subject to any caveats donors may place on the use of funds, and could put the Government at risk of being unable to deliver against expectations. Furthermore, MINUSCA would require additional dedicated human resources to increase its contract management and enhance oversight, administrative and programme delivery capacities.

Support for longer-term redeployments (beyond 18 months)

41. In parallel with immediate operational redeployments, the Government will require support from partners to implement its long-term plans for its armed forces. This would include sustainable garrisoning for all European Union Mission-trained or certified battalions, with priority for the permanent garrisoning of one European Union Mission-trained battalion in Bouar and temporary measures for two battalions in Bangui in 2018. The permanent presence of a Central African armed forces battalion in Bouar would allow the Central African armed forces to better project operations in the west of the country in response to security threats and to increase the security of the main road to Cameroon, on which most imported and exported goods are transported. The national police and gendarmerie will also require support for long-term redeployment in line with their five-year capacity-building and development plan.

Coordination mechanism

42. My recommendations are aimed at ensuring that any support provided by the United Nations on the basis of the comparative advantages of MINUSCA is complementary to the support provided by other multilateral and bilateral partners to the Central African defence and internal security forces and is provided in a transparent, coherent and coordinated manner. MINUSCA will continue to coordinate the support of bilateral and multilateral partners at the strategic, operational and tactical levels in accordance with resolution 2387 (2017) through established and ad hoc mechanisms. These coordination mechanisms include the defence sector working group, chaired by the European Union Military Training Mission and MINUSCA, and the internal security forces working group, chaired by MINUSCA.

43. These forums bring together international partners supporting the reform of the defence and internal security forces. MINUSCA will also support the national authorities in their coordination of international assistance, including through the Committee for the Coordination of Cooperation for the Central African Armed Forces (Comité de coordination de la coopération pour les forces armées centrafricaines), established in February 2018 by the Ministry of Defence.

Conclusion

44. I firmly believe that the progressive and controlled redeployment of the Central African defence and internal security forces has the potential to bring about a positive impact in addressing violence and threats to civilians, as well as in restoring State authority and ensuring the restoration and maintenance of public safety and the rule of law. As I stated during my address to the National Assembly in the Central African Republic in October 2017, I heard the call of the Central Africans for the redeployment of the Central African armed forces and I would like to reiterate the commitment of the United Nations to support these redeployments.

45. Nevertheless, I recognize the risks that these redeployments can carry for the population, for the United Nations, and potentially for the peace process, should national commitments for the transformation of the Central African security sector not materialize rapidly, should the forces not adhere to the standards of conduct expected, or should there be insufficient support from the international community — or should the international community step away from its unified, coordinated support for the Central African Republic and MINUSCA.

46. Therefore, my recommendations are subject to the fulfilment of key conditions by the Government that are aimed at enabling the national authorities to assume their sovereign responsibilities for the security of their own people and to exercise them in compliance with human rights and humanitarian law, while also providing a future perspective of the Central African Republic without the presence of international forces. While significant in nature, the proposed support is limited in scope and duration; it is also limited to services that would not expose United Nations personnel to risk or the Organization to liability and for which there are existing systems contracts. It also takes into consideration the need to avoid the risk of creating dependency on this support.

47. I firmly believe that any country's security must be in the hands of national authorities, within a security framework supported by the population. In the case of the Central African Republic, the achievement of this objective should be a key priority to pursue without jeopardizing the protection of civilians and gains made for the stabilization of the country. The lack of proactive support in the current context would represent a far greater risk, as this would entail slower redeployments and weaker mechanisms to ensure good conduct.

48. I also wish to re-emphasize that this is a collective responsibility to support the Central African Republic in achieving its long-awaited peace and stability. Support to the Central African defence and security forces is a joint endeavour by all of the country's partners. MINUSCA cannot and should not carry the burden alone of assisting the Central African authorities to redeploy their armed forces. Each of us has a part to play, from training to equipping to oversight to support. None of us — let alone the Central Africans — will succeed otherwise. I am grateful for the unity of the Security Council on the Central African Republic, and for MINUSCA.

49. I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**